

J. LOCKHART LIVINGSTON, M.D.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Annual Report for 1895.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

Gentlemen,—I have to report 42 deaths as registered during the year—21 males and the same number of females. Nineteen were persons over sixty-five, and ten were under five years. Of the 42 deaths three were of persons not belonging to the district, and one person from this district died in Winchester Hospital, so that the corrected number of deaths is forty. The estimated population at the middle of 1895 being 3,344 the death rate is 11.96 per thousand (1894, corrected number of deaths 41; rate, 13.12; 1893, corrected number of deaths 34; rate, 11.11 per thousand). Ten deaths occurred in Hursley (including two at Pitt); three in Ampfield, and three at Chandlers Ford; fifteen at Otterbourne, and two at Allbrook; four at Baddesley, and one at Rownhams; one at Farley (Slackstead), and three in the Workhouse. Causes of death:—Whooping cough, 1; measles, 2; influenza, 2; cancer, 1; consumption, 1; other diseases of lungs, 7; heart disease, 10; apoplexy and brain disease, 2; other diseases, 10.

Births.—One hundred births, equally divided amongst males and females, were registered during the year. This gives a birth-rate of 29.90 per 1000 of population (1894, 80 births, rate 25.61; 1893, 77 births, rate 23.17).

Notifications of Infectious Disease.—Sixteen notifications of infectious disease were received during the year (13 in 1894, and 34 in 1893). Six referred to diphtheria; five to scarlet fever; four to erysipelas; and one to puerperal fever.

Diphtheria.—There were three cases of diphtheria at Hursley, one at Otterbourne, one at Allbrook, and one at Ramally, Chandlersford. In the last-mentioned case it was contracted while attending Chandlersford School; the case at Allbrook was supposed to have arisen through the emptying of a neighbouring unventilated cesspit. In two of the cases at Hursley the drainage presented obvious defects. No cause known for the other cases. All recovered, and there was no spread. In each case the room was fumigated.

Scarlet Fever.—There were five cases of scarlet fever, all at Rownhams, probably introduced from Southampton, and as there were other cases cropping up amongst children living outside this Union, but attending the school at Rownhams, this was closed, on my recommendation. After this only one further notification was received. The school closets being in an unsatisfactory state the opportunity was taken to re-construct them on the dry earth system with fixed receptacle, and this has proved very satisfactory. I regret that the boys' urinal has not been dealt with in the same way. I reported at the time that the well water at the master's house was unfit for use (and has been so for years), and a supply is procured from the vicarage. All the cases recovered. Numerous visits and personal inspections were made, and I had frequent communication with the managers and the teacher. Fumigation was carried out in each case, as well as at the school.

Puerperal Fever.—One case of puerperal fever at Rownhams. I inspected the premises and found the privy overflowing and filthy, and the well in need of cleaning out and covering; but as the farm was about to be vacated this was left over until the change of tenancy.

Erysipelas.—Four cases of erysipelas, all at Hursley—two in the workhouse, one at Ladwell, and one at Silkstead. Three of the four had had erysipelas before.

Measles.—Two cases of measles at Otterbourne proved fatal from bronchitis.

Whooping Cough.—One case of whooping cough fatal from bronchitis.

Influenza.—Influenza was prevalent during the first quarter of the year, but of milder type than in previous epidemics. Two cases fatal at Otterbourne.

Absence of Provision for Isolation.—It is again my duty to remind the Council that we are still without any provision for the isolation and separate treatment of cases of infectious disease.

Water.—I have examined about 20 samples of water. A few were bad; but I am not aware of any case where a proper supply is not available.

Inspections.—Drainage.—I have again paid a good deal of attention to the details of drainage, particularly of new buildings, and I regret to say that in my opinion the way in which this is carried out is in many cases unsatisfactory. I have before referred to the comparative merits of water and dry earth closets, and I am convinced that, except in the best class houses, the latter is the method of disposal, *par excellence*, in the country, in the absence of sewerage. There is still the slop water to be disposed of; but in most cases, where there is a fair-sized garden, this need cause no difficulty. I shall mention a few of the more obvious defects of the water closet system on a small scale (these are actually in existence, and instances can be given by the Inspector or myself). 1. Closet cesspits (in gardens) ventilated at the surface of the ground or a foot or two above.

Soil-pipe ventilators carried up to the roof of the lean-to and ending within a short distance of the windows of the house itself, and on a lower level. 3. In some instances the entire absence of soil-pipe ventilators, and of the fresh air inlet as well, or alone; also the absence of the cesspit ventilator, and this in spite of the bye-laws. 4. The ignorance of workmen as to the proper construction of drains—use of straight pipes for bends in the drain, small pipes connected to larger ones without the intervention of the proper taper-pipe, non-provision of traps because it only takes rain water (forgetting that an untrapped drain acts as a ventilator to the drain or cesspit in which it ends). On the other hand it is satisfactory to report that in a number of instances my suggestions have been carried out wholly or in part, and, as a rule, with improvement in the healthiness of the premises.

Hursley Drain.—In reference to the drain in Hursley village, on which I have more than once reported, a committee of the Hursley Councillors has met, and their recommendation will no doubt be presented forthwith.

Allbrook Drain.—The drain at Allbrook resembles that in Hursley, and will probably have to be dealt with in the same way to avoid nuisance.

Smoke-testing Machine.—A smoke machine for testing drains has been procured and found satisfactory.

Offensive Trades.—No action has been called for in respect to offensive trades.

Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.—Dairy-keepers are now registered, and the premises inspected from time to time.

Summary.—On the whole, and with the exceptions mentioned above, I think I may claim that the record of the year is a satisfactory one.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,
your obedient servant,
J. Lockhart Livingston.

Hursley, W. Winchester
18th February, 1896

